



NCRR Responds to Sept. 11

By Kathy Masaoka

In response to the attacks in New York and Washington, NCRR helped to organize a candlelight vigil on Sept. 28. About 300 people gathered in Little Tokyo to express support for the victims and to speak out against the scapegoating of Arab Americans and American Muslims. Speakers from the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) shared their concerns for their communities and thanked the Japanese American community for their support. One of the speakers called NCRR's Lillian Nakano his hero after hearing her emphasize the responsibility of Japanese Americans to speak out against scapegoating.

The NCRR Sept. 11 Committee was formed to continue planning events that build understanding between the Japanese American-Asian American community and the Arab American and the Muslim communities. In November, the committee sponsored a presentation by the Afghan Women's Mission about the work of the Revolutionary Association of Afghan Women. Members of the committee continued to meet with representatives of MPAC, ADC, CAIR and the Southeast Asian Network to exchange and to organize other programs.

On Dec. 8, a "Break the Fast" event was held at Senshin Buddhist Temple to learn about Ramadan and to share the experiences of Buddhists during World War II. After the prayers and incense offerings members from Kinnara Taiko performed during the potluck. Reverend Masao Kodani and Salam Al-Marayati of the Muslim Public Affairs Council answered the questions of the more than 100 people

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Rev. Masao Kodani of Senshin Buddhist Temple, Salem Al-Marayati and another member of the Muslim Public Affairs Council answer questions at the "Break the Fast" event.

2002 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE COMMEMORATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF SIGNING OF E.O. 9066 AND LEGACY OF SEPT. 11

By Kay Ochi



Michel Shehadeh of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, will keynote the 2002 DOR.

The 2002 Day of Remembrance program, "1942 and 2002 - Without Due Process, From Japanese American Internment to Arab American and Muslim American Detention," will take place on Saturday, Feb. 16 at 2 PM at the Japanese American National Museum, 369 East First Street, Los Angeles.

This year's Day of Remembrance marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 which led to the mass exclusion and internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese Latin Americans. The theme reflects issues which will be explored, in particular, the similarity in the civil rights violations inherent in the exclusion and mass incarceration and the similar violations occurring in the

aftermath of the national tragedy of Sept. 11.

Michel Shehadeh, Western Regional Director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, will present the keynote speech. As an Arab American, he will share his experiences before and after Sept. 11. Reminiscent of the treatment of Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor, Arab American and Muslim Americans have been the targets of racism, hate crimes, and racial profiling.

Other highlights of the program are the presentation of NCRR's Fighting Spirit Award to Art Shibayama for his activism in the campaign for reparations for Japanese Latin Americans and his current lawsuit against the government seeking redress equity, an update on the current legislation on behalf of Japanese Latin Americans, and cultural and performance presentations featuring Traci Kiriya and performance artists Jude Narita and Denise Uyehara.

The Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress (NCRR), the Japanese American Citizens League - Pacific Southwest District (JACL/PSWD) and the Japanese American National Museum are the sponsors of the DOR program.

A reception will follow the program. Admission is free, however, due to limited space, reservations are required. Please call the Japanese American National Museum at (213) 625-0414 Ext. 2230. For more information about the program contact NCRR at (213) 680-3484 or JACL/PSWD at (213) 626-4471.



Japanese American Art Shibayama will be presented with the 2002 Fighting Spirit Award.

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who gathered to participate in the event. Although Buddhism may be diametrically opposed to Islam, Reverend Kodani asked why shouldn't we be able to live together as friends. Salam expressed their appreciation for the solidarity from the Japanese American community which was the first to contact them and said that Muslims and Buddhists are united in their belief in one humanity and the need for mercy, justice and compassion.

Traci Kato Kiriya, Denise Uyehara and Jude Narita performed pieces that brought many to tears. They will perform at the Day of Remembrance program on Feb. 16 (see article). Other upcoming events include the "Civil Liberties and the Need for National Security: Does one Negate the Other?" (see flyer) and a picnic in April, National Arab American Month. These events are being funded in part by a grant from the California Council for the Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



L-R: Jude Narita and Denise Uyehara were among the performers at the "Break the Fast" event sponsored by the NCRR 9-11 Committee.

LAZO FILM TEMPORARILY ON HOLD UNTIL MAY

By Janice Yen

Filming of the much-anticipated docudrama about Ralph Lazo, "Stand Up for Justice," has been rescheduled for the end of May 2002 due to unforeseen scheduling conflicts. Pre-production activities were halted last summer, but will resume in the spring of 2002. Diane Matsuda of the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program has been informed of the delay.

"The delay, while unfortunate, will give us a chance to audition more young men for the part of Ralph Lazo," commented Director John Esaki. "If you know of any Latino actors that can look and play the part of a 1940's high school student, please let us know!" A number of promising young actors were auditioned last summer at Visual Communications and at Marshall High School. The NCRR Education Committee and several NCRR members who were former camp internees attended various readings and gave their opinions of the actors. The "perfect" Ralph is still out there to be discovered.

Lazo was a unique individual—gregarious and friendly yet mature enough to spend months and, as it turned out, more than two years away from his family. He left school to go to Manzanar with his Nisei high school friends. Amid the confusion, Ralph managed to board and remain on a train full of Japanese Americans bound for camp under armed military guard. At Manzanar he endeared himself to the older Issei as well as to his Japanese American schoolmates.

When production actually starts in May, individuals are encouraged to volunteer as extras and to assist in other ways. After the exact dates of the "shoot" are set, a call for volunteers will go out in the local newspapers, to e-mail lists and to community organizations. Because the project was only partially funded, fundraising will eventually take place to help with post-production costs.

The 30-minute film is partially funded through grants provided by the federal Civil Liberties Public Education Fund (CLPEF) and the state California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP). The educational docudrama will be used in the public schools to convey the deep personal impact of the concentration experience on one non-Japanese American and to explore the warm personal ties that developed between persons from different ethnic backgrounds. For more information contact NCRR at 213-680-3484 or Visual Communications at 213-680-4462.

JUSTICE FOR BOB BRATT — AN UPDATE

By Kay Ochi

Robert K. Bratt, former Director of the Office of Redress Administration, has recently reported to NCRR on the status of his ordeal involving the 3-1/2 year investigation of his work and personal life and the unsubstantiated allegations made against him by the Inspector General (IG) of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

At this time he is trying to figure out a new strategy as to how he can get access to the IG's documentation of the investigation. The DOJ denied his request for copies of the documentation which he feels would shed considerable light on what happened. He mentioned that given the environment in the government after Sept. 11, he is not surprised that the DOJ took this tact with him. He is talking to attorneys to consider the best way to approach this current event. It may take a couple of months to formulate a plan.

Bob added that the donations to the legal defense fund by the Japanese American community are greatly appreciated and have touched him deeply. NCRR was contacted this week by Terri Itano of the Marysville Chapter of the JACL about the chapter's decision to donate \$1,000 to the Bob Bratt Legal Defense Fund which would bring the total donations to over \$6,000.

NCRR once again encourages individuals and organizations to assist in Bob's legal defense through donations to the "Robert Bratt Legal Defense Fund/ NCRR" c/o NCRR, 231 E. 3rd St. Suite G-104, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

Donations are tax-deductible. For further information contact NCRR at (323) 680-3484.



Bob Bratt, far right, with NCRR members Jim Saito and Bert Nakano (L-R).



See more photos and stories
at
www.ncrr-la.org

CUBA DELEGATION SPEAKS ABOUT TRIP

By Jennifer Kuida

On Sept. 30, over 100 people gathered in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo to hear stories, listen to music, watch slides and video from the first Japanese American Delegation to Cuba in August 2001. Last summer, 18 Asian Americans from Los Angeles visited Havana and the Isle of Youth in Cuba. On Jan. 12, the delegation travelled to San Francisco and Oakland to once again share their experiences.

Members of the delegation, sponsored by Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress (NCRR) shared their impressions of Cuba and exchanges with the Cuban Japanese community. The delegation resulted from the efforts of Los Angeles activist Judy Ota who had learned about the 100 year history of Cuban Japanese from Francisco Miyasaka, President of the Japanese Cuban Society, while she visited Cuba with her daughter to meet her Cuban relatives a couple of years ago. Upon her return to the US, Ota and her sister, Kathy Masaoka organized a California speaking tour for Miyasaka last summer with the sponsorship of NCRR, Japanese Cultural Community Center of Northern California, National Japanese American Historical Society, and Japanese American National Museum, among others.

One of the goals of the delegation was to reintroduce *Obon odori* (obon dances). At the report-back sessions, the delegation, spanning in age from 18 to 75, screened a short video edited down from over 16 hours shot by delegation member Janice Yen that gave a glimpse into Cuba and the Japanese Cuban Obon festival held on the Isle of Youth.

Important highlights of the Delegation's stay on the Isle of Youth were meeting the two surviving Isseis on the Island and touring the Presidio Modelo (Model Prison) where over 300 Issei men from throughout Cuba were imprisoned during WWII.

Delegation members also shared their observations of Cuba's revolutionary society and its social and economic programs that include free health care and education (through college) to all Cubans. They also shared the effects of the last decade of economic downturn due to the pull out of aid from the former Soviet Union, and the difficulties resulting from ongoing U.S. Blockade against the tiny island nation.

According to Evelyn Yoshimura, delegation organizers plan to bring two Cuban Japanese to California during Summer 2002 to experience Japanese American Obon. Individuals and groups are encouraged to find out how they can help with this cultural exchange. "We are also in the initial stages of planning a second US delegation to Cuba for Spring 2003. Now is an excellent time to get involved," stated Yoshimura.

For more information about future Cuba delegations, contact NCRR at (213) 680-3484 or Tony Osumi at (310) 301-4915.

REDRESS LEGAL CASES WINDING DOWN

By Richard Katsuda

It is now three years since the sunset of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 and the closure of the Office of Redress Administration (ORA). In that time, several redress claimants and their attorneys have fought for their due justice in the courts.

For Japanese Latin Americans (JLAs), it has been a tough struggle to gain appropriate redress. The settlement agreement in the *Mochizuki v. U.S.* case accorded redress that was bittersweet, as JLAs received monetary compensation of \$5,000, one-quarter of what Japanese Americans received under the CLA. Several JLAs "opted out" of that agreement, and a few decided to file lawsuits against the federal government, stating that they would fight to get the form of redress that they felt they deserved.

Henry Shima of Los Angeles was one of the "opt-outers." He was very angry at how the government treated him during World War II, and he got Paul Mills, one of the attorneys in the *Mochizuki* case, to represent him. Mr. Shima's case was denied in the lower courts and in an appeal to the federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. He decided not to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Art Shibayama of San Jose and his brothers Kenichi and Takeshi have also "opted out" of the *Mochizuki* settlement and filed a lawsuit with their attorney, Karen Parker. The Shibayama case was heard on July 6, 2001, at the Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C. They are still waiting for a decision.

There has been another set of lawsuits filed on behalf of redress claimants born after their parents had moved from the West Coast or after their parents had left camp. Carole Song, represented by attorney Lisa Ikemoto, won her case and brought optimism for the other similar lawsuits. Unfortunately, the courts have not been as hospitable in the other cases.

Wendy Hirota, represented by Alex Fukui and Patrick Hattori, has recently heard that her case was denied at the Court of Federal Claims. She and her attorneys will not pursue an appeal.

On Dec. 5, 2001, Robert Murakami, represented by John Ota (an NCRR member in the San Francisco area), had his hearing with the Court of Federal Claims in Pasadena. They are waiting for the decision in this case.

In Dec. 2000, before the federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, Paul Mills argued the case for Kay S. Kato, Jane Yano, and four members of the Ogura family. In Jan. 2001, the court dismissed their claims. Mills and the six plaintiffs later submitted a petition to the United States Supreme Court, but the high court chose not to hear the case.

Although we have almost exhausted our efforts in the courts, there is momentum in Congress for legislation that would provide a remedy for unfinished business for redress claimants. Please see the article on the work of the Campaign for Justice.

LITTLE TOKYO RECREATION CENTER STILL GOING STRONG

By Christina Shigemura

At a LT Rec Center Coalition-sponsored community meeting held at Centenary Church on Nov. 17, Councilwoman Jan Perry promised to convene a meeting which will include the Geffen Contemporary Museum, the JA National Museum, the Children's Museum, the LT Rec Center Coalition and other stakeholders on the First Street North site. Although Perry could not give a definite date for the meeting, she said that she hopes to provide a public forum for all of the parties involved to discuss their concerns about the Rec Center.

All comments made at the public meeting will be transcribed in an official record, so it is important for people who support the Rec Center to attend. As soon as Councilwoman Perry confirms a date for the public meeting, that information will be posted on the Rec Center's website at <http://reccenter.ltsc.org>, or call 213/473-1690.

COMMUNITY NEWS

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The Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates (KIWA), a long-time ally of NCRR and a tremendous organization that has changed the landscape of ethnic organizing, has launched a new organizing campaign—the Market Workers Justice Campaign. Thousands of Korean and Latino immigrant workers currently labor in approximately 20 Korean-owned supermarket stores throughout Los Angeles and Orange County. All non-union, these supermarkets, which are comparable in sales and size to mainstream markets like Ralphs and Vos, generally pay its workers only minimum wage and provide little or no benefits.

Understanding that immigrant workers have been isolated into poverty wage jobs in L.A.'s immigrant communities and that Korean supermarket workers are demanding respect and a fair contract, KIWA is organizing workers into an independent union, the Immigrant Workers Union (IWU).

Recently, workers filed a discrimination claim with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against Assi Supermarket. The claims are from current workers who feel they have been denied employment because of their national origin.

Since filing the claims, EEOC has begun an investigation. Also, the management at Assi has been reducing the shift hours of certain workers but not others. In one of the worst cases, two workers have been reduced to three-hour shifts working only four days a week for the minimum wage while other workers' hours are being increased.

KIWA and the market workers are seeking supporters to attend community support meetings, participate in delegations to market owners and assist in planning fundraising events. To support this campaign, please contact KIWA at (213) 738-9050 or kiwa@kiwa.org.

NCRR is now online! Check out the latest NCRR events, news and issues at www.ncrr-la.org!!

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**Save the Date! 2002 Day of Remembrance
on Saturday, Feb. 16th! (details inside)**